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ANOMALIES AND DIFFICULTIES IN THE TELUGU DUBBED FILMS FROM ENGLISH
WITH REFERENCE TO THE MOVIE TITANIC (1997): CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at analyzing the difficulties of a dialogue writer/ script writer/ translator in dubbing a film from a foreign language to a Native language in particular reference from English to Telugu. The researcher has chosen the film Titanic (1997) as a reference to discuss the anomalies and difficulties. The first part of the paper discusses the common difficulties of translating a film English to Telugu. In the second part of the paper, dialogues from various scenes are taken in English and they are compared to the dialogues in Telugu thereby to discuss how effectively the Translation has succeeded in translating the essence in the dialogues to the target audience. The later part of the paper quotes some helpful suggestions made by the experts in the field. The conclusion part sums the discussion.

Key words: Translation, Dubbed Films, Telugu, Titanic, Difficulties, Solutions.

Introduction

The strenuous process of dubbing a movie from one language to the other language is very high than Translating a text from one language to the other. The reason is, while translating a text from the source language to the target language; the translator can take up free translation. She/he can ignore the untranslatable phrases and they can use the suitable phrases in the Target language. When it comes to dubbing a film, they need to dub each and every dialogue that the artist on the screen utters. One more complex factor in dubbing the dialogue, they need to take care of the lip sinking to the dialogue.

“In dubbing there are frequent incongruities between what real actors say and how they move their lips, and the dubbed voices, which affects the audience, largely on a subconscious level.” (Agneska 2005).

Even though the writer can use a better phrase in the context, they use another phrase to ensure that the lip moment of the artist sinks to the dialogue in the target language. The Producers prefer dubbing a super hit Films in one language to the other rather than remaking the film, as it saves a lot of effort and money to the producer. When the movie is dubbed from one language to another language, the role of the person who writes the dialogues in the dubbed language is very crucial. He or she needs to be proficient in both the languages. The setting of the films need not to be formal all the time, different characters portray different emotions, different characters represent different social class, each dialogue uttered by an artist need not be explicit all the time. Hence, the task of artist, who writes the dialogues to a dubbed film, is more complex than the original dialogue writer.

A vast number of movies are dubbed into Telugu from other languages in South India and sometimes from Hindi too. When it comes to dubbing a film from South Indian Languages is easier than dubbing a movie from a foreign language like English. The main reason is because of the similarities in the cultural and Linguistic aspects. Dubbing a movie from English Language to Telugu is much more complex process. The researcher has chosen to explain the difficulties of Translating English language to Telugu with reference to the movie, The Titanic (1997). The movie is phenomenally successful and unanimously accepted by the critics and audiences all over the world. When it comes to the audience of Telugu, Most of the people, who have watched the film, have seen it in English. Not being well versed in English has not been a hurdle to appreciate the movie by the Telugu audience. But, the movie is later dubbed into Telugu Language in order to telecast on Television channels. Unlike other movies that are directly dubbed and released into Telugu, The Titanic (1997) is dubbed much later, after many of the Telugu audience have appreciated the movie in English version itself. When the Telugu audiences have seen the film in Telugu version, they have found some of the dialogues to be unnatural. This researcher wants to highlight such difficult aspects of translation, but not to find fault with the Translator, but to discuss how difficult it is to be translator of dubbing movie.

The Discussion

The researcher wants to analyze few scenes to bring out the points to ponder over:

Scene 21:

"Bodine: She is a Goddamn Liar! A nutcase...Like That

What's her name? That Anastias babe

Buell: They're Inbound

Bodine: She Says She is Rose de Witt Bukater, right? Rose.

De Witt Bukater died on the Titanic at the age of 17.

If she'd lived, she'd be over a hundred now.

Lovett: A Hundred and one next month.

Bodine: Okay, so, she's a very old goddamned liar. I traced her as far back as the 20'sshe was working as an actress in L.A An Actress. Her name was Rose Dawson. Then She married a guy named Calvert, moved to Cedar Rapids, had two kids. Now Calvert's dead, and from what I've heard Ceda Rapids is dead." (James Cameron Scene 21)

In the scene mentioned above, Bodine calls her a goddamn liar at the beginning. When Lovett tries to convince him that she is hundred and one in one month, Bodine, who is not still convinced, says "Okay, so she's very old goddamned liar". The satirical and unconvinced Bodine's dialogue could not be effectively translated into Telugu.

In Telugu version:

Bodine says "Nuvvu aavida matlu nammaku, when Lovett says, she is hundred one year old, Bodine says, " oho, alaga? Avvida gurinch anni telusukunnavnna mata" (oho , is it? you have learnt everything about her!!!) the satirical and unconvinced tone of Bodine is not heard rather he sounds to have been convinced or rather resigned in his tone in Telugu.

Scene 28:

"Rose: This was mine. How extraordinary! It looks the same as the last time I saw it.

She overturns the mirror over and looks at her ancient face in the cracked glass.

Rose: the reflection has changed a bit" (James Cameron Scene 28)

"the reflection has changed bit" Rose, this dialogue is well improvised by the writer " deeni rupam naa lage maripoinidi" (the shape of the mirror changed like me) , he could have used, "baga maripoinidi" or "chedipoidi" but he has used the dialogue to fill up the space in terms of number words at the same time, the writer has also gave a meaningful dialogue that brings a similarity between the defaced mirror to the face of hundred year old women.

Scene 33:

"Brock: Just tell us what you can.

Rose (holds her hand for silence) It's been 84 years.....and I can still smell the fresh paint. The China had never been used. The sheets had never been slept in" (James Cameron Scene 33)

The dialogue that Rose says in the dialogue to imply that Titanic is pristine is translated as “Titanic ni appude tayaruchesaru, adho marchipoleni anubhuthi” (Titanic is newly made, it is an unforgettable experience) .when compared to the original dialogue that is “I can still smell the fresh paint. The china had never been used. The sheets had never been slept in” the dialogue in Telugu could not be as figurative as it is in English. at the same time, it is not justified to demand the dialogue writer to take up the literary translation and to give similar expression in Telugu because the rate of speech, in which the character says the dialogue is very fast so that the dialogue writer could not find better words to fill up to the lip moment. But the bottom line is that the dialogue has lost the flavour.

Scene 38:

“Jack: we are the luckiest sons of bitches in the world” (James Cameron Scene 38)

The writer uses his culture consciousness in translating this dialogue in this scene: “ Mana lanti adrustavanthulu inka evaru undaru” (No body is as lucky as we are) . In the cultural context of Telugu audience, it is inappropriate to swear. Hence the writer eliminates the curse words in this dialogue and makes it a refined expression.

Scene 65:

“Jack; Well, they have some of the coldest winters around, and grew up there, near Chipewa Falls. Once I grew up there, near Chippewa Falls. Once when I was a kid. Me and my father were ice-fishing out on Lake Wissota...ice-fishing’s where you chop a hole in the.....

Rose: I Know what ice fishing is!” (James Cameron Scene 65)

In the English version of this dialogue, Rose says, “I Know what Ice fishing is!”. In Telugu, She says “ Naaku e ice fishing teliyadu” (I don’t know what ice fishing is). Reading it in a text appears that the writer has changed the meaning of the dialogue but the writer has succeeded in making the sense of impatience in Rosy’s voice to be heard to the audience. Giving the positive statement as in English cannot give the same impact in Telugu language. Hence the writer changes the positive sentence into the negative sentence. It does not have any impact on the scene or intensions of the artists. Jack wants to deviate her; Rose gets the point and snaps his chatter.

Scene 79:

“Rose: Cal, surely you remember Mr.Dawson.

CAL: (caught off guard) Dawson! I didn’t recognize you. (Studies him). Amazing! You could almost pass for a gentleman”. (James Cameron Scene 79)

“Amazing! You could almost pass for a gentleman” this dialogue is translated as “ meeru ilanti dress lu kuda vesthara?” (Do you wear this kind of dresses too).the sarcasm and high-handedness of Dawson is not expressed effectively but the writer has succeeded to some extent in mapping it to the catchy expression in Telugu. However, In Telugu it expresses more of a surprise but the dialogue writer in English has a different intention.

In the next scene,

Scene 80:

“RUTH: And where exactly do you live, Mr.Dawson?

Jack: Well, right now my address is the RMS Titanic. After that, I’m on God’ good humour.

Salad is served.Jack reaches for the fish fork.Rose gives him a look and picks up the salad fork, prompting him with her eyes. He changes forks.

RUTH: You find that sort of rootless existence appealing do you?” (James Cameron Scene 80)

“You find that sort of rootless existence appealing, do you?” Ruth. Such demeaning words of Ruth are translated as “ meeru dabbu kosam emi chesthu untaru” “ what do you do for living?” the translator must have thought that the reply given by jack is the heart of the scene but not the insulting remark made by Ruth. Jack’s fitting reply to the question loses its vigour, if the question is not that humiliating. “What do you do for living?” is rather a conversation starter and a friendly question. Whereas, in English version, it is a humiliating question that exposes the character of Ruth. It also gives the opportunity to the director to elevate the scene in the form of giving a perfect reply by Jack. The writer should have used an expression something like “ alanti galivatam brathuku meeku alavaatu aayipoyi untundi anukunta?” .

Apart from various other anomalies, it is also observed that there is not much difference is heard in the stylistics between the rich and the middle class sections in the dubbed version in Telugu Language. The dialects cannot be translated but there should have been some difference between the language that the characters, who travel in third class and the characters who travel in the first class.

Suggestions

Galar (2015), gives the following suggestions to the on screen dialogue writers of the dubbed films:

- a) Make sure that the dialogue is not talking all the mystery out of the plot by giving information too early or the mystery of the characters by making statements that are too clear.
- b) Be sure that your dialogue has maintained a consistency of style.
- c) Make sure that each character uses the speech patterns appropriate for the individual and the situation, and that the speech patterns of characters are sufficiently differentiated from each other.
- d) Make sure you haven't unconsciously tidied up the language.
- e) Make sure that the dialogue engages us emotionally.
- f) Creating the effect of natural, credible and true-to-life dialogues.
- g) Promoting a balance which avoids overacting and under acting, when dubbing actors perform the dialogues (i.e., avoiding cacophonies, etc.)

Conclusion

Only a few scenes have been taken to discuss, which means that the Translator has done a very good job in making the Magnum opus to reach the Telugu audience. As discussed earlier, it is not to find fault with the dialogue writer/ Translator, who is an unknown and remains to be the unknown artist, whose name is not even shown on the screen. It takes so much of effort to translate the movie into some other language. This paper is an attempt to analyze and to make some suggestions to improve the Translation of the movies more effective.

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